

*Background Material
for 25 October*

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25 October 1962

I. The Situation in Cuba

There is no change as of 1500 EDT in the number or construction pace of offensive missiles in Cuba, but the most recent aerial coverage to hand is that of 23 October.

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An untested clandestine anti-Castro Cuban source reports that Cuban military road traffic in the vicinity of the Guantanamo Naval Base increased greatly during 22-23 October.

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II. Soviet Shipping to Cuba

The Soviet freighter KASIMOV, known to be carrying military cargo for Cuba, has reversed course and reentered the Baltic. As of 1430 EDT it has been determined that 15 of the 22 Soviet ships en route to Cuba on 23 October have turned away. Two tankers and one dry cargo ship are known to be continuing on course for Cuba. Another three tankers and one freighter are believed without confirmation to be moving toward Cuba.

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III. The Situation in the Bloc

A. Military:

There are scattered suggestions that some Soviet and satellite armed forces elements may be on an alert status, but there is insufficient evidence to conclude that any widespread alert has been called. Most key commands continue normal training.

One tenuous report suggests that 11 LRAF Badgers may have deployed to the western Arctic on late 24 October. Air defense activities apparently are normal and there is still no indication of an alert.

There have been no further suggestions of an alert in the Soviet Ground Forces and no redeployment of units has been noted other than for local training. Two temporary restricted areas have been set up in East Germany along the border with the Federal Republic, effective from 26 October through 4 November. The duration of the restriction and the location of the areas suggest a routine exercise.

Soviet naval activity appears to be at a normal level with routine training under way in all fleets. The US Navy is prosecuting two submarine contacts--one 500 miles north-east of Bermuda, the other off the Oregon coast.

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B. Political:

Moscow apparently has not yet replied to U Thant's proposal of a two-week standstill for negotiations. The Indian ambassador in Djakarta, however, has reported that Soviet ambassador Mikhailov told him the USSR would be willing to negotiate the question of removing rocket bases from Cuba. Mikhailov told Pant the USSR would suspend shipment of further material during such talks. Such a reaction would be consonant with an apparent Soviet belief that time will provide growing opportunities to press the US for negotiations which could lead to suspension of the quarantine and other Communist objectives.

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IV. Non-Bloc Reaction

Non-communist reaction remains generally favorable to the US, but there is some apprehension, as in Turkey, over possible Soviet retaliation. In the UN, according to a Yugoslav delegate, "many neutrals" agree that a "neutral socialist Cuba" as defined in a UAR speech could be the key to a peaceful solution. The UAR called for dismantling of all foreign bases. The Cypriot delegate says the non-aligned group seeking a solution through U Thant includes five unspecified Latin American countries, Austria, and Sweden. Various reports note that published aerial photographs of missile sites in Cuba have had an impressive effect in increasing support for the US on the part of UN delegations.

Nehru has expressed sympathy with the US position. Several other leaders, such as Bourguiba and Nkrumah, are reluctant to commit themselves publicly to either side.

Macmillan told parliament today that any Cuban settlement must include an accurate check on removal of offensive weapons from the island. Gaitskell agreed, and did not call for a debate.

25X1  has stated privately that he feels the US action did not go far enough, and that it would have simplified problems "for all of us" if the US had moved rapidly to destroy the missile bases. Two cabinet ministers say De Gaulle feels the President's action was correct, and that the USSR will back down or at least seek a way out.

Major Zurich banks report a wave of demands from West Germany for gold.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
25 October 1962

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Bloc Shipping Dispositions

1. The latest data available to this office indicates that with the exception of the vessels involved in the Cuban lift, the activity of the Soviet merchant fleet in both domestic and foreign operations is continuing on a normal basis. There has been no evidence of diversions or voyage cancellations involving vessels outside of the Cuba lift. Only a scattered few of these vessels have been involved in cipher traffic with the USSR. The situation appears to be similar with regard to the Soviet fishing fleet.

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3. The latest tabulation of Bloc maritime deployment is shown below and is believed to approximate present-day disposition:

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4. Answers to your specific questions:

(a) The tanker GROZNY. According to position reports on 23 and 24 October, Grozny had slowed down considerably. Subsequent position reports indicate that the ship is now proceeding at normal speed. This tanker has attached to its deck several tanks reportedly filled with a total of 566 tons of ammonia for delivery to nickel producing firms. Two other Soviet tankers which regularly call at Cuba are similarly equipped.



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(c) The dry cargo ship E. PUGACHEV, now in the north Pacific and scheduled to transit the Panama Canal on 2 November, is en route from Vladivostok and is assumed to be carrying a commercial cargo--reportedly including beans. All Bloc ships passing through the canal are automatically subject to search

(d) The return to the USSR of the 15 Soviet vessels which have thus far failed to continue their voyages to Cuba should have no effect on the Cuban economy, since all these ships were believed to have been carrying military equipment. The two ships believed to be transporting commercial cargoes have not turned around.



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